

THE CONNECTION



VOLUNTEERING FOR A SWEETER LIFE

Hear how participants on our programmes have been volunteering across Israel and why it is still so important

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LEAVING
A LEGACY
TO UJIA

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LIVE THE HISTORY. CREATE THE FUTURE.

Dear UJIA Supporter,

When we usually write to our supporters at this time of year, we are reporting on a successful and joyous summer of Israel experiences.

But just a few months ago we didn't know if any of these experiences would be possible.

However, thanks to the efforts of our team, as well as our partners at the youth movements, the Jewish Agency for Israel, Taglit-Birthright Israel and others, more than 600 young British Jews took part in a life-changing, educational trip in Israel.

Through Youth Movement Israel Tours, our community's post-GCSE cohort began their lifelong relationship to Israel and its people. Via Taglit-Birthright Israel, for those aged 18-26, many experienced Israel for the first time, and the Onward Israel programme allowed young people setting out on their careers to gain experience in some of Israel's most successful industries.

The war had an impact on itineraries and many of our groups met with the families of those still being held hostage nearly a year on. Others visited the sites of the attacks and heard some of the countless stories of bravery that have emerged from that day. Everyone experienced a new Israel, an Israel that is subdued but determined to rebuild harnessing the energy of the entire Jewish people.

In this edition of The Connection you will read about how UJIA and the Jewish community will be a key part of the physical and emotional rebuilding of two communities that were, in all senses of the word, devastated on 7th October. You will learn how a group of British Jews are making a real difference and discover how leaving a legacy to UJIA will benefit future generations.

Thank you for your continued support,



A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink.

Zvi Noé
Chair

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink.

Mandie Winston
Chief Executive

Young Leaders' Mission By Amber Pinto

In June the UJIA Young Leaders' Mission brought together future leaders of the Jewish community, with the objective of understanding the complexities of the ongoing Israel-Gaza War - in order to continue our work supporting Israel and the Jewish people within our respective fields.

We were aided by UJIA and external educators, spiritual leaders and diligent staff who catered to a diverse range of participants from a wide range of backgrounds, interests and disciplines. The trip at a macro level was a wholly life changing experience filled with harrowing recollections, floods of emotion and, for me, a feeling of renewed importance to continue my work as the Chair of The Blue & White Club - the fast growing young professional network of StandWithUs UK.

We visited key sites of the terrorist infiltration into the South of Israel: Kibbutz Mefalsim, Sderot and the Nova Festival. Each site has its own tragic story - from the hundreds of innocent souls looking to enjoy dance music who were barbarically murdered at Nova to the bulldozed police station in Sderot - destroyed in order to prevent further loss of life after becoming a terrorist stronghold for over 24 hours. Meeting with displaced communities, many of whom were similar in age to our group, provided us with powerful accounts - coupled with stories from Nova survivors, Zaka volunteers and local security forces.

These tragic collections of events were met with an exponential list of heroic, inspirational and selfless acts of bravery - such as the Kibbutz Mefalsim security guard who single handedly fought off four terrorists. The strength and resilience of the Israeli people was truly palpable - whether that was hearing from a UJIA-



Meeting young people displaced from their homes at Kibbutz Mefalsim

supported rehabilitation centre that has worked tirelessly to use animals to allow children to process their trauma - to witnessing the very necessary UJIA-supported rebuilding efforts of Kibbutzim in the South. Support for Israel and the Israeli people's right to self determination in their ancestral homeland has never been more important.

After an in-depth educational session at StandWithUs facilitated by UJIA, we were equipped with the tools and knowledge to have challenging conversations and shape opinion, infused with the important first degree testimonials we had heard. We cemented the need as a cohort to take what we had learnt to our peers, colleagues and industries back in the UK, while as a group making connections that exceeded timeframes and will bond us for the years to come.

On a personal level, it was a privilege to be a part of such a transformative mission. I will be forever grateful to UJIA and all the organisations, communities and individuals that filled our rich itinerary, and took the time to share their personal stories. I will carry them throughout my life and will never forget the importance of a strong Israel and the need for a united, vigorous and robust pro-Israel community in the UK.

Amber Pinto

Chair of The Blue & White Club - the young professional network of StandWithUs UK

Israel Tour 2024 - Our commitment to Israel

By Adam Waters, Director of UJIA Israel Experience

Israel Tour is a core part of the Anglo-Jewish community's calendar and has been a rite of passage for teens finishing Year 11 for decades. Despite the devastating impact of 7th October on Israel, and the pain and concern we have felt in the diaspora, UJIA Israel Experience has been committed to ensuring Israel Tour is able to go ahead for those who wish to participate.

In the weeks and months following 7th October we mourned for family, friends, and colleagues, and have shared in the grief of the people of Israel. We prayed for the swift return of all hostages and the healing of those injured and continue to do so.

UJIA Israel Experience has, for many decades, worked closely with a wide network of Youth Movements and organisations in the UK, tour providers in Israel, and Israeli security services. This has enabled us to run Israel Tours

safely through conflict and unrest and has ensured that these formative educational experiences will continue to be a rite of passage for countless young people in the British Jewish community. We knew we had to do all we could to make sure Israel experiences took place this summer.

It was clear to us that continuing to arrange and support trips to Israel was more important than it has ever been. We have an educational responsibility towards our youth to provide them with meaningful educational Israel experiences, and this summer's Israel programming will also bring a vital and much needed boost to local communities who are deeply appreciative of diaspora Jewry's solidarity at this time.

We therefore committed ourselves to finding a pathway to run Israel Tour this year with the safety and security of participants as the utmost priority.





Despite a number of challenges and delays, we were proud to launch the application process in February of this year.

This summer we supported 500 young people as they deepened their connection to Israel with Bnei Akiva, Ezra Youth, FZY, Habonim-Dror, Sinai, and Tribe. The youth movements we support are a valuable asset to our community and have worked tirelessly and with creativity to produce a tour itinerary that balances Jewish identity, Zionism, and Israel experiences, with impactful projects to support the Israeli community. All groups this year had a strong focus on volunteering, visited Kikar Hatufim (Hostages' Square) in Tel Aviv and experienced first-hand the strength and resilience of the people of Israel.

With the security situation as it was, there were adjustments. Each tour had an armed security guard at all times, itineraries were checked and approved daily by Israeli authorities, and there were geographical restrictions in place



for tour groups. UJIA Israel Experience supported our young leaders through an enhanced partnership with mental health professionals on the ground in Israel, and with new training on safety and security delivered by experts in the field. We also provided comprehensive crisis management support, GPS tracking for each bus, and a team of professionals on the ground in Israel on call 24/7.

There is no doubt this summer was different. The young people on Israel Tour had been looking forward to this opportunity for a number of years, and their youth movements ensured they still experienced all they had hoped to. The fantastic tiyulim, water activities, shuks, beaches, culture, religion and heritage of Israel, in an environment of youth empowerment. But this year there was more. It was even more impactful. Even more meaningful. Even more important. Now more than ever is the time to deepen our connection to Israel.

Recovery and Rebuild Campaign

We are approaching the first anniversary of the horrific attacks of 7th October. UJIA's work is therefore shifting from helping to provide the immediate support that victims and their families needed and projects to help those evacuated communities that were forced away from their homes.

Although much of this will continue as long as it is needed, the new focus of our work is on helping two of the kibbutzim that were invaded on 7th October to rebuild, and evacuated northern communities with whom UJIA has long-term relationships. And through all of this, and across the country, we continue to support vital trauma relief work.

Kibbutz Be'eri

Residents of Kibbutz Be'eri used to refer to their home as a paradise for children.

That paradise was destroyed on 7th October. A welcome sign hangs in the window of the destroyed kibbutz kindergarten. The sign features fluffy owls, along with the words "*Gan Tamar. Welcome to our home.*" The window is shattered by three bullet holes. More than eight months later, the children – the families – of the kibbutz have not yet returned to their home. Now we want to help bring them back – and, with them, bring hope and a future back to Kibbutz Be'eri.

Raising children was central to this tight-knit community. "*A pillar of Kibbutz Be'eri community is the kids,*" said Ido Shwartz, a Be'eri resident.

Be'eri was one of the communities worst affected by the Hamas attacks of 7th October. More than 120 civilians were murdered, one-tenth of the population.

26 residents were taken hostage. During the attack, dozens of Hamas terrorists invaded the kibbutz kindergarten, using it as a base. The education centres of the kibbutz – nursery, schools, playgrounds – were devastated by the fighting that followed; TV footage shows a hole blown in the wall of a kindergarten classroom, a painted Winnie the Pooh smiling innocently down on the carnage.

The destruction of its education centres has crippled Kibbutz Be'eri. In order for the kibbutz to function properly, it needs what one resident refers to as "*the base*" – families with children. And the families have not yet returned, because there is no school or nursery for them.

Our project will form part of a comprehensive rebuilding of the education area of the kibbutz, incorporating three new kindergartens, an open area for sports and an afterschool activity centre for primary-school and bnei-mitzvah children. The education area of the kibbutz sits – symbolically and physically – at the heart of the kibbutz.

"Because of the massacre, we have more than 30 orphans here," Ido said. *"We want to hear them laugh again. Those kindergartens will be the place where they will laugh once again. The kids will thrive here once those kindergartens will be ready to be used."*

Kibbutz Mefalsim

UJIA is partnering with the Jewish Agency's Partnership2gether initiative that is forging partnerships between affected kibbutzim and Diaspora communities. The priority need for Mefalsim is to support the young adults and young families and to create



Photo credit: Blake Ezra Photography

additional value for them so they are encouraged to return to the kibbutz and build their lives and families there, ensuring its viability. This will be a multi-year initiative covering mental health support, scholarships and renovation of the centre for young adults. We have already held several people-to-people interactions between UK groups and kibbutz members, and this summer many young residents of Mefalsim joined UK Jewish youth movement camps.

Northern Communities

The situation in the north is extremely difficult and the level of uncertainty makes it challenging to make any kind of long term plans, as those residents who are evacuated do not know when they will be able to return home. UJIA has chosen to apply its funding in short time periods for now as the situation is dynamic and evolving. To that end, we are continuing to make a number

of allocations which are focused primarily on children and youth who are evacuated as well as those remaining in place. We are prioritising communities that UJIA has been supporting over many years, and in some cases decades, such as Kiryat Shemona, Shlomi and the regional councils of Merom Hagalil and Maale Yosef.

In the aftermath of 7th October, the UK Jewish community came together to support the people of Israel in their hour of need. The response was instant, and it was open-hearted and generous. But the residents of southern kibbutzim and evacuated northern communities have a long and difficult journey ahead. Many bear profound physical and emotional scars. Many remain in limbo, living in hotels while they wait for their community to be rebuilt. Healing and rehabilitation will take time, and it will not be easy.

Volunteering in Israel By Andy Katz

Since the start of the year I've had the opportunity to volunteer in Israel on several occasions.

I've met many farmers facing the challenge of running their farms: planting, harvesting and maintaining crops - without the skilled agricultural labour that was available before October from countries like Thailand.

The farmers I've helped grow almost any fruit and vegetable you can think of, including all the core products we take for granted.

While volunteers cannot fully replace agricultural workers, we are filling a critical gap and providing a much-needed psychological boost. Israelis are wowed when they see volunteers from abroad, valuing the support provided to them, their families, communities, and livelihoods at such a perilous time.

And volunteering is not just about farms and agriculture. Valued help can be given by supporting displaced Israelis, schlapping, even making tzitzit and much more.

I wanted to find a tangible way to offer support following 7th October. Volunteering is a great way to connect with Israelis, to connect with other Jews, and to Israel. On my trips I met volunteers from the UK and beyond, but remained conscious that far more people from the UK are able to come given our relative geographic closeness.



I want to slay some of the perceived complexities around volunteering, bringing to life how easy it is, explaining where to start and the key things to do (and not do) in planning your volunteering trip.

With my friends Ronit, Ari and Russell we produced a guide to volunteering with tips and links to key volunteering resources. Much of this guide has been adopted by UJIA, and is available by visiting ujia.org.

With cooler weather not too far away, now is the perfect time to consider your volunteering visit. Whether for a few days, a few weeks or longer. Planning your own trip is simple – check out the UJIA website. Volunteering will be rewarding for you, valuable for those you support and something you can look back on with satisfaction as you recall that you did your bit.

Want to know more? Still unsure? Interested in joining a volunteering group? Email me at isvoluk@gmail.com.

I hope to see you in Eretz Yisrael.



Want to support Israel by volunteering, but unsure where to start?

Head to ujia.org/volunteer-in-israel for a Toolkit to aid volunteers from the British Jewish Community.

Letters, Light and Love

We were thrilled to be chosen as the charity partner of Letters, Light and Love, an historic event held on 30th June, raising funds for the new kindergarten at Kibbutz Be'eri.

This one-night-only special featured stars like Eden Golan, Emmy-winner Debra Messing, Shtisel actor Michael Aloni, and Dame Maureen Lipman, who shared the words of Golda Meir, Winston Churchill, fallen soldiers and others. With over 800 attendees, the event raised an incredible £960,000. This will make a significant difference in the lives of those affected by the attacks.



Photo credit: Blake Ezra Photography

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Leaving a Legacy to UJIA

Feared 'Weakest Link' quizmistress Anne Robinson has announced that she is giving away her £50m fortune to her family so that the Chancellor doesn't take her 40% share in Inheritance Tax.

Robinson may not be alone in considering Inheritance Tax to be arguably the most iniquitous of taxes, being levied as it is on assets accumulated during your life and on which income tax has already been paid. But she is a rarity in giving away, and being in the fortunate position of being able to afford to give away, all of her wealth. Most of us do not have that luxury, at least not without the risk of keeping back too little to see us through the remainder of our life.

For most of us any Inheritance Tax planning and mitigation is likely to be more modest and measured.

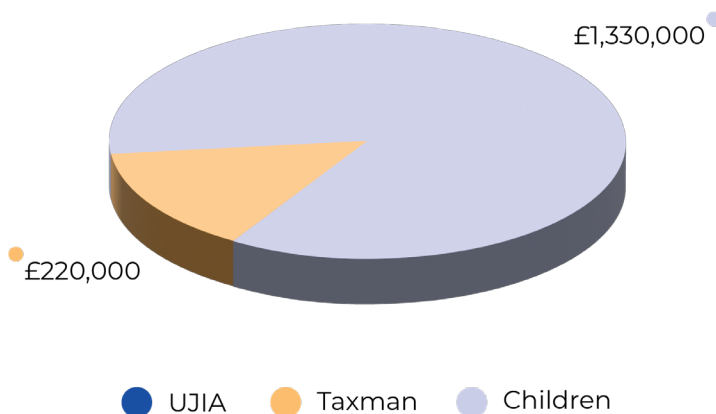
Inheritance Tax is levied on estates in excess of our own personal allowances, similar to our income tax allowances.

Take Helen and David Goldstein, a married couple with children, Hannah, Benjy and Sam. They have a joint estate of £1.55m, including their house.

In their will, Helen and David can give away £1m without incurring any tax at all. This is made up of a basic allowance for Helen of £325,000 and a further allowance of £175,000 against their house, a total of £500,000. And all of that duplicated for David, giving a total of £1m. Pretty generous, you might think. However, the basic allowance has been frozen since 2009 (and will remain frozen until at least 2028) and inflation, especially house prices in the south-east, means that the freeze has reduced the value of that allowance in real terms by more than 35%.

Tax is only paid on the excess above the total allowances. So, for Helen and David, only the excess of £550,000 is taxed, at a rate of 40%, generating a tax bill of £220,000 and leaving the remaining £1.33m to their children. Here's how the estate is divided on second death:

Division of estate with no charity legacy



One way of both reducing the tax whilst also supporting your favourite charities was introduced in 2012 but is little known and used. And that's to set aside 10% of your taxable estate to charity. For David and Helen, that means £55,000 out of the £550,000 taxable estate. This generous step rewards you by triggering a reduced rate of tax, just 36% instead of 40%. This might not seem much of a saving. But the effect is dramatic. Take the same example as above, but this time with the £55,000 charity legacy. Now the taxable estate is both reduced in size by the charity legacy and rewarded with the reduced 36% tax rate.

Critically the three children have lost out by just £4,400 each - a total of £13,200 – for the people UJIA supports to benefit by four times that amount, £55,000. Helen, David and their kids consider that a small price to bear for their favourite charity to benefit from a sizeable legacy gift, for UJIA's good work in and for Israel.

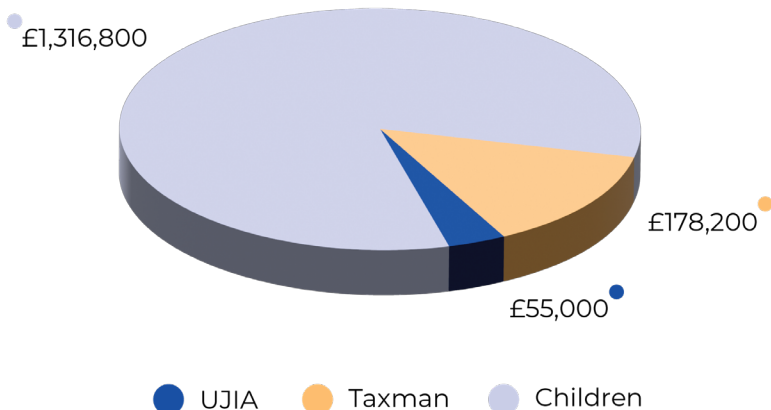
Most people for whom charitable giving is important to them during their life, once made aware of the tax benefits of structuring their will in this way, agree that it's a 'no brainer'. In essence they can leave a sizeable legacy to charity, and then get the taxman to pay for more than three-quarters of it.

An animated version of the above example can be viewed at: tinyurl.com/UJIA-IHT

For a free, no obligation consultation, contact solicitor and UJIA Director of Fundraising and Planned Giving, Harvey Bratt on 020 7424 6431 or by email at harvey.bratt@ujia.org.

This article sets out general principles relating to Inheritance Tax. Comprehensive legal advice can only be provided on a case by case basis depending on each person's own individual personal, family, financial and tax circumstances.

Division of estate with £55,000 legacy gift to UJIA



OCTOBER 7

For details of commemorative events around the country,
please visit ujia.org/events

